

SACS/CASI Accreditation Achieved - We Did It!

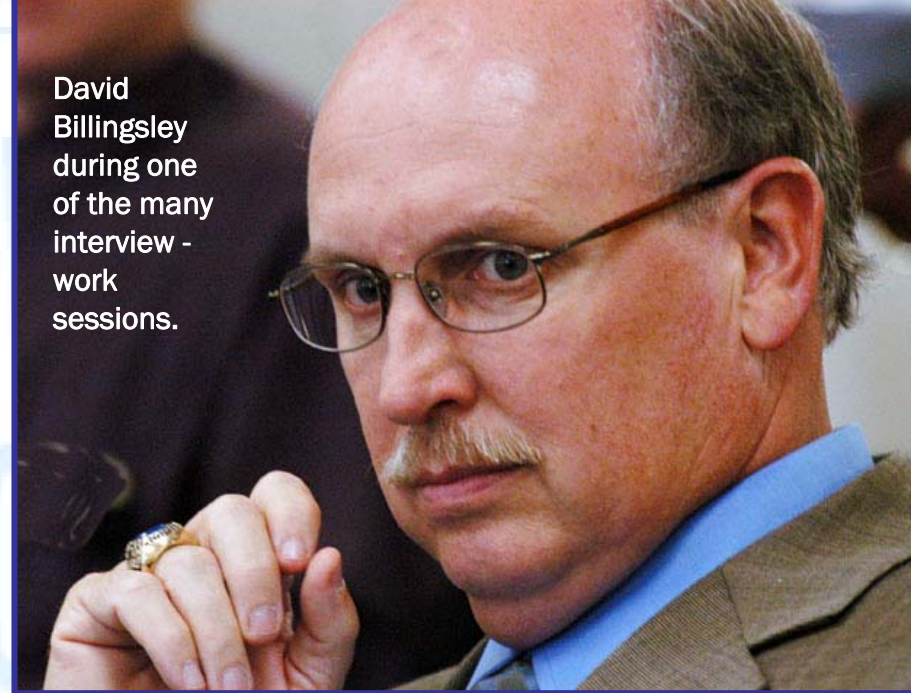
The Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) is setting a trend in Kentucky by going above and beyond what is necessary for our students to continue their education. The hard work has paid off! The OCTE and its KY Tech System of 55 area technology centers completed an intense three-day accreditation visit conducted from September 11-13 by the Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) – Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI). On September 13, 2006, OCTE central office employees, KY Tech principals and teachers heard SACS/CASI Associate Executive Director for Operations Mont Bush say, *"The Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Team recommends, without reservation, to the SACS CASI Board of Directors that KY Tech be awarded district accreditation as a quality school system. I want to say that at this moment, you are accredited. The Board will accept our recommendation. It's a perfunctory activity in approving our recommendation."*



"This is historic for our system, as well as SACS, since we are the first state career and technical education school system to receive SACS accreditation. This is the culmination of a team effort from all of our employees and everyone can be proud of this accomplishment," says OCTE Executive Director David Billingsley. "Continuous is ongoing, so we are beginning another phase where we will be implementing the improvement plans which we have developed and addressing the SACS recommendations."

David Billingsley during one of the many interview - work sessions.



"Based on the continuous improvement process, a monumental effort has been undertaken throughout the KY Tech system and I want to commend all the stakeholders," said newly appointed Department for Workforce Investment Commissioner Beth Smith. "The historical significance in that we are the first technical education system to become accredited is an outstanding accomplishment for Kentucky."

Photo at left: Department for Workforce Investment Commissioner Beth Smith addresses SACS/CASI and KY Tech audience at Capital Plaza Hotel.

What does district accreditation involve?

- meeting standards for accreditation;
- demonstrating a system and continuous process of improvement; and
- implementing methods that provide for quality assurance.



In the fall of 2004, the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) officially contacted the Southern Association of Councils and Schools (SACS) to apply for district accreditation. In October 2005, SACS approved the KY Tech System of Schools formal request to become a candidate for district accreditation – a first in the history of SACS.

The ensuing process put in place for the accreditation visit included conducting a self-study and developing a continuous improvement plan. While the whole process has included people from all levels of the system; OCTE Division Director John Marks, Branch Manager Myra Wilson and Academic Consultant for Program Assessment Wayne King have worked tirelessly to ensure success.

John Marks talks with David Billingsley during a work session. Myra Wilson is in the background and QAR Team Member Gene Kirchner is in the foreground.



Data, documentation, observation and dialogue were examined and considered as evidence by the QAR Team in developing a summary of strengths, achievements, commendations, limitations, challenges and recommendations.

In his oral exit presentation, Bush commended KY Tech for the creation of an exemplary district continuous improvement plan and conveyed that the QAR team's recommendations would be minimal because weaknesses in the system had been identified, and changes and improvements were already taking place.

"I must say this has probably been the best organized, guided self study that I have experienced in the 25 years I have worked with the Southern Association, "said Bush. "The documents have been exact and right on target. It's been an outstanding job."

Photo below: SACS – CASI QAR Team members Dr. Joe Abalos (FL), Mark Raleigh (KY) and Richard Murphy (NC)



Summary of Strengths Sited by the SACS/CASI QAR Team

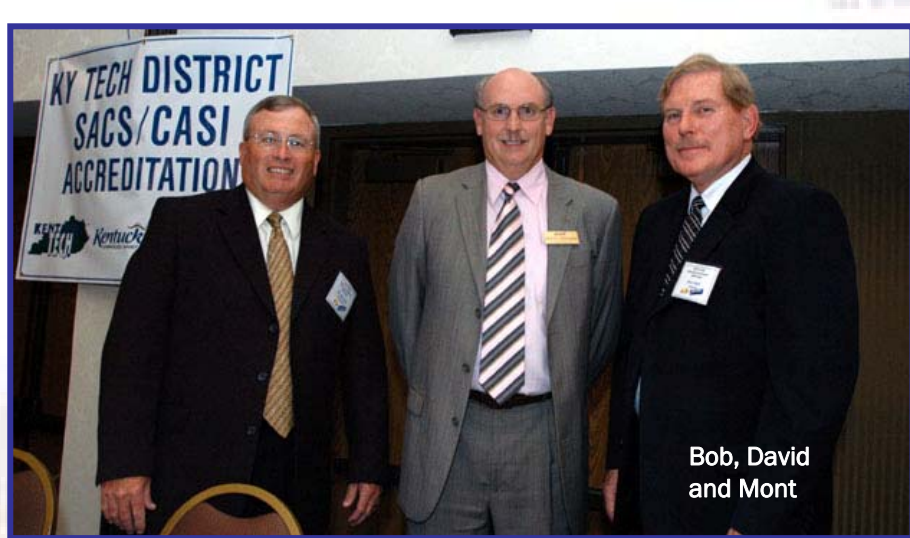
Principal's Advisory Council
Standardized Curriculum Initiatives
High Functioning Student Organizations
Program Assessment/Data Driven

Kentucky Occupational Skill Standards for Assessment
Flexibility

Industry Certified/Credentialed Staff
Willingness to Work Toward Integrating Academics into Technical Courses
High Levels of Collaboration Between and Among Staff

Support for Professional Development
Curriculum Alignment with KCTCS
Application of Skills





Bob, David
and Mont

“I’ve never seen a better continuous improvement plan than the one KY Tech put together. Without a doubt, KY Tech has raised the bar for site visits,” says Dr. Storer. “If you meet quality standards, you will have a quality system and KY Tech has certainly set the benchmark for a quality system. It’s been a pleasure and privilege to work with the OCTE team.”

“This truly is a journey of excellence. We have established a national standard for career and technical education,” says OCTE Division Director John Marks.

“This benchmark will provide the foundation for school improvement that will continue to impact KY TECH students for decades to come.”



Photo above: (l to r): Mont Bush and Dr. Bob Storer.



Photo above: Dr. Bob Storer and Myra Wilson consult during a work session.

QAR Team Members

- * Mr. Mont Bush, Chairman
SACS/CASI Associate Exec. Dir. of Operations
- * Dr. Robert Storer, Vice Chairman
SACS/CASI Kentucky Director
- * Dr. Lucy Welzant-Hayden, Georgia
- * Melinda Isaacs- NCA/CASI-West Virginia
- * Dr. Joe Abalos, Florida
- * Marsha Bond
Brookhaven District Fed. Programs Coord. - MS
- * Dr. Jay Heath - NCA/CASI-SD
- * Patti Sanders-Smith
Wilson Co. Assistant Superintendent-NC
- * Richard Murphy
Wake Co. Schools Sr. Dir.-HS Curr. & Inst - NC
- * Dr. Teri Brown - Kenton Co. School District, KY
- * Dr. Joyce Logan -University of Kentucky
- * Gene Kirchner - Deputy Supt. – Walton-Verona, KY
- * Mark Raleigh - Boone Co. H.S. Principal, KY
- * Loretta Dixon - Boyd Co. CTE Ctr. Principal – KY
- * Robert Clark –Florida
- * James Hardin -Southside Tech. Ctr. Principal - KY

The 16 member QAR team was made up of education professionals from across the country. During their 72 hour visit, the team interviewed 454 persons including KY Education Cabinet Secretary Laura Owens, legislators, city and county officials, school board members, superintendents, and a variety of



Above: QAR Team Members Marsha Bond and Dr. Teri Brown

stakeholders who support KY Tech's vision, mission and goals. Team members also traveled approximately 2,000 miles statewide to make official site visits to 12 ATCs including Boone Co., Caldwell Co., Casey Co., Floyd Co., Hughes-Jones Harrodsburg, J.D. Patton, Lake Cumberland, Lee Co., Lincoln Co., Montgomery Co., Ohio Co., and Rockcastle Co.



Photo (l to r): KY Tech Area Supervisor Barney Judd and OCTE Deputy Executive Director Lewis Carter.

"I'm proud of the outstanding effort from all of our KY Tech family and have always known the people in this system have the ability to perform beyond the norm," said Carter. "The continuous improvement process is not a one time event, it is a journey that has and will continue to make the system even better – not only at the state level, but nationally."

"First of all, I'm proud to be part of this organization because we have done a great job of focusing on our vision, mission and goals," says Judd. "This system is as strong as

I've ever seen it; however, as with any continuous improvement process, we will need to evaluate the findings of the SACS-CASI QAR team. It will be up to us to incorporate the changes into the system to become the national flagship for career and technical education."



Ohio Co. Superintendent Soretta Ralph, State Representative Tommy Thompson, Dr. Joyce Logan and Patti Sanders-Smith.



Barb Roberts (front) and Ellen (r) Rowe pose with Logan and Smith

Ohio Co. ATC staff with QAR Team members Dr. Joyce Logan and Patti Sanders-Smith



Floyd Co. ATC



Photo at left: OCTE Academic Consultant Wayne King and Floyd Co. ATC Principal Lenville Martin review details for visit.

"I'm proud of my faculty and staff. Their hard work and dedication to the program assessment and development of program and school improvement plans has been outstanding," says Martin. "I'm glad we were chosen to undergo a site visit. We have all grown as a result of the continuous improvement process. We're proud of who we are and what we do to provide technical education and skills training for the students in our area."



Photo above (l to r): Health Sciences Instructor Vicki Long watches as Commissioner Smith, Dr. Storer and Mont Bush talk with health sciences students.

Harrodsburg ATC

Photo below (l to r): Bush, Storer and Principal Duane Flora.



Photo above: Office Technology Instructor Damian Laymon explains some of the technology to Commissioner Smith, Bush, Executive Director David Billingsley and Dr. Storer.



QAR Team Members (l to r) Melinda Isaacs (West Virginia) and Robert Clark (Florida)

At right:
Montgomery Co.
ATC Principal
Mike Kindred,
Executive Director
David Billingsley
and Office
Technology
Instructor Angela
Barker.



At right: Dr.
Bob Storer,
Nelson Co. ATC
Health
Sciences
Instructor Pat
Pike and
Principal John
Sanders.



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Above: Clark Co. ATC Health Sciences
Instructor Harriet Winger, Billingsley,
Dr. Storer and Principal Karen Bothun.

